Tandonji's Resignation

Reg. No. B3092

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 29 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1951 TWO ANNAS

## MAHATMA GANDHI AND PROHIBITION

No one possessing reason is expected to believe that Mahatma Gandhi, whose life mission was the welfare of the backward and the downtrodden, would have looked upon the introduction of Prohibition by law with disfavour. The very thought is unkind to the champion of the suffering masses. Despite this, antagonists of Prohibition are searching vainly through the writings of the Mahatma for something that would serve their purpose and in that effort they sometimes pick up excerpts divorced from their context.

### Compulsion — If Necessary

Unfortunately, the Mahatma is not alive to contradict the statements attributed to him. Nonetheless, his writings in *Young India* abound in expressions that leave no doubt about the working of his mind on this question. They clearly show that not only was he for the banishment of drink lock, stock and barrel but he was a champion of bringing about that reform with the sanctions of the legislature and the executive. For, he says: "You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion, and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The State does not cater for the vices of its people. We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both?" (*Young India*, February 23, 1922).

### No Need for Referendum

Mahatma Gandhi was also emphatic in his views that there was no need for taking referendum on the question of Prohibition, for, in his opinion, drink and drug habit are universally recognized as a vice. He says in *Young India* of April 22, 1926, "Drink is not a fashion in India as it is in the West. To talk, therefore of referendum in India is to trifle with the problem." For the same reason Gandhiji thought that India is the most promising country in the world for carrying out total Prohibition.

For Mahatma Gandhi, drink was a crime worse than thieving and so he would not countenance the argument that Prohibition was in any way an interference with the rights of people. On this point he was very emphatic when he said: "There is as much flaw in the argument that it is an interference with the right of the people as there would be in the argument that the laws prohibiting theft interfere with the right of thieving. A thief steals all earthly possessions, a drunkard steals his own and his neighbour's honour." (*Young India*, January 6, 1927).

### What He Would Have Done

Mahatma Gandhi's sanction for the use of State machinery for the enforcement of Prohibition can be found in the following excerpt from his article in *Young India*, of August 8, 1920: "I do not hesitate forcibly to prevent my children from rushing into fire or deep waters. Rushing to red water is far more dangerous than rushing to a raging furnace or a flooded stream. The latter destroys only the body, the former destroys both body and soul."

Again he says: "If I was appointed dictator for one hour for all India, the first thing I would do would be to close without compensation all the liquor shops, destroy all the toddy palms such as I know them in Gujarat, compel factory-owners to produce humane conditions for their workmen and open refreshment and recreation rooms where these workmen would get innocent drinks and equally innocent amusements. I would close down the factories if the owners pleaded want of funds. Being a teetotaller, I would retain my sobriety in spite of the possession of one hour's dictatorship and, therefore, arrange for the examination of my European friends and diseased persons who may be in medical need of brandy and the like at State expense by medical experts and, where necessary, they would receive certificates which would entitle them to obtain the prescribed quantity of the fiery waters from certified chemists. The rule will apply *mutatis mutandis* to intoxicating drugs." (*Young India*, June 25, 1931).

### Tainted Money

The Father of the Nation was always against using tainted money on progressive measures of the Government. He states his point of view on this subject very vehemently when he says: "It is a revenue which must be sacrificed and whilst it lasts, it should be held as sacrosanct and be wholly dedicated to the purpose of eradicating

the drink evil. But today it is being utilized for educating our children with the result that a tremendous barrier has been put against this necessary temperance legislation. People are made to think that they will not be able to educate their children if this revenue stops. If things go unchecked like this, a whole nation might have to perish. If the evil spreads, it may be too late to undertake legislation." (*Young India*, April 11, 1929).

## SHRI VINOBA'S TELANGANA TOUR

### I

*April 14 : Gopuri.*

On the occasion of inaugurating the Sarvodaya Conference at Shivarampalli, Vinoba had given the message of the five-fold programme. It was good not only for India but for the whole world. The programme, as already published, consists of internal purity, external cleanliness, labour, peace and dedication. This *mantra* did not come to Vinoba all of a sudden, but was an expression of his life-long synthetic *sadhana*. Did not our ancient seers conceive *mantras* as a result of wide experience and austerities ? This five-fold programme was born of a vision based on experience.

Vinoba's Telangana tour was a part of the practice of the five-fold programme propagated by him in the Sarvodaya Conference. Vinoba had in his mind the idea of undertaking the tour of Telangana when he left Wardha for Shivarampalli. The readers are aware that at the time of leaving Wardha, he had said before a gathering that he did not know that he would return and that that meeting might prove their last meeting. This hint touched the hearts of the people who had gathered there to give him a send-off. They had no idea then that he had contemplated the Telangana tour. Hence it was difficult for them to understand what he meant. But with the commencement of the tour we could realize the import of the words uttered by him at the Lakshminarayan Mandir at Wardha.

The programme of the tour was arranged after reaching Hyderabad. The situation in Telangana was said to be serious and a tour without police protection was not regarded safe. But what protection other than that of Rama may a soldier of *Shanti Sena* expect ? On being asked therefore about protection by the Government, Vinobaji informed them that there was absolutely no question of armed or unarmed protection by the police, whether in uniform or without it. The mission that brought Vinobaji to Telangana demanded, as a matter of fact, that no Government employee or officer should accompany him. The Government respected Vinoba's wish.

The next point to be settled was who should accompany Vinoba on this tour ? The tour from Wardha to Shivarampalli was of a different nature. A few workers more or less in number did not matter there. But this was an area where humanity was uprooted. Vinobaji therefore decided to take only a small number with him. They were also asked to keep only the minimum luggage with them. Hence, several workers were asked to return, and the luggage was greatly reduced.

Aryanayakamji had suggested that a moving exhibition of all the processes from cotton to cloth should accompany the party. The idea was a welcome one because we had felt its need during our tour on the way to Shivarampalli ; but even this idea had to be given up in this programme, and we had to be content with only spinning.

It was suggested that Vinobaji should avoid hospitality from the moneyed class, the land-owners, the Deshmukhs and the like. That would create, it was suggested, misunderstanding about him and injure the cause. Some well-wishers, who were also sympathizers of the Communists, went to the length of suggesting that even Congressmen should be avoided. But Vinobaji did not agree. He would stay with any one who came forward to accommodate him and his party. He was not prepared to differentiate between man and man. The sun made no such distinctions, nor did the air ; and *Rishi* Narad went to the prince and the peasant, to gods, men and demons alike. This *untouchism* of staying at one place, and not doing so at another, was not at all in Vinobaji's nature. Every being was a form of *Narayana*, and he would not say that one was better than the other.

Thus began the tour in Telangana. The day happened to be the *Ramanavami* day.

Between Shivarampalli and Hyderabad Vinobaji was scheduled to halt at Gopuri, another centre of constructive work started by Shri Lochandas, an ardent devotee of Gandhiji and an enthusiastic worker in the cause of *goseva*. He had spent some years at Wardha and undergone training in the work of *goseva*, and had now returned to Hyderabad, his birthplace. He devoted every single minute in furthering the cause of *goseva*. At the Shivarampalli Conference he spared no pains to see that the delegates were supplied with good cows' milk. In Hyderabad he has been able to create an atmosphere favourable to the cow.

At a distance of ten miles from Hyderabad, near the historic fort of Golconda, Shri Lochandas has secured some land for the Goseva Mandal founded by him and his colleagues. Vinobaji spent the day at this centre. There were not a few visitors : the Food Minister of Hyderabad State, Shri Vinayakrao Vidyalankar, constructive workers and other Government officials were among them.

A Kasturba centre started with the help of Smt. Dnyankumari Heda, was declared open by Vinobaji. Addressing the villagers in his post-prayer meeting, Vinoba said that the mission of *goseva* was in fact a mission of service of the villagers. Life without the cow had become an impossibility in India. Children, the old and the diseased, all need cow's milk. The cow and the ox are a part of the family. Both give full work and provide man's needs and the villagers should take care of them till they breathe their last. Vinoba further said that the necessary fodder, concentrates, etc. required for their animals should not be purchased from outside, but should be produced in the village itself. Milk should be made available first to the children and the people of the locality. Only the surplus might be sent to the city. The workers and their associates from the village should work as equals. The grain which they sowed should be utilized for home consumption. Similarly *till*-seed should be sown with a view to extract oil for local use. If there was, thus, proper co-ordination of the energies of the cow, the bull and the man, the workers who stayed there would not require to purchase anything from outside.

Some herbs, Vinoba continued, would have to be grown so that they might serve them as medicines in illness. The children of the workers should be educated locally along with the other children of the village. Thus the villagers and the workers should identify themselves with one another completely. The villagers should join the evening prayers. *Bhajans* should be recited in both Telugu and Hindi.

"The picture of a self-sufficient village-life and of manifold activities of service should manifest itself here. Your work should become a source of inspiration to the people around. This should help in eliminating the use of money in the life of the villagers. This is possible only when the workers identify themselves with the people of the village.

"A Kasturba centre is also being started here through the efforts of Shrimati Dnyankumari. This means that this centre will render service to children and to women also. In short, it will be a centre of *Samagra Seva* (service in all fields). You should look upon the workers as self-appointed servants to serve you. Some people have blamed Lochandas for having gone ten miles away from the city. They feel that it would have been better if he had stayed in the city. They are astonished at Lochandas' decision to stay in this jungle. My view is that city is

another name for jungle, for, the jungle is associated with brute life. Will you call it a civilized place, where people do not know one another, but like brutes of the forest cut one another's throats and destroy each other ? Let all those, who are opposed to village life, realize that those dearest and nearest to God, His devotees, are in the villages, and this is a mission of service to them."

D. M.

## EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

The following statements about alcohol are taken from *Health Education*, a publication issued for teachers in England by His Majesty's Stationery Office on behalf of the British Government's Board of Education. It will be seen that they refute the claims and allegations of anti-prohibitionists, who have become so conspicuous of late in the *Times of India* and other journals.

"The effect of alcohol on the nervous system is to depress rather than to stimulate its functions. The apparently stimulating action...is due to its depressing action upon the highest and latest developed part of the brain, namely, that which is associated with the exercise of the intellect and of the will. The emotions released from normal control are left free play to respond to the immediate environment in which the drinker finds himself.

"Among the successive steps (of the action of alcohol) the following may be noted:

1. Blunting of self-criticism.... Among the resulting effects of this blunting may be cited —

(a) inaccurate workmanship in regard to mathematical calculation or such handiwork as shorthand and type-writing;

(b) uncritical self-satisfaction of the individual with his work and actions;

(c) disregard of conditions normally requiring caution of act and word;

(d) trespass upon rules previously respected;

(e) impaired appreciation of the passage of time;

(f) talkativeness;

(g) an argumentative frame of mind; quarrelsomeness.

2. Interference with the performance of skilled movements, indicated by clumsiness of behaviour, by the slurring of words, and by insecure muscular control.

3. The blunting of the senses — of hearing, taste, touch, and vision.

4. The display of the primary emotions. Anger at one moment, affection at another; similarly with boisterousness and depression, laughter and tears.

5. The failure to respond to external stimulation and the eventual lapse into a heavy sleep (pp. 84-85).

"If one takes such common offences as, for example, assaults, cruelty to animals, damage to property, it has been held that a relatively high percentage of such offences is attributable directly or indirectly to drink (p. 90).

"The policy of certain life assurance offices of late years has been to give somewhat more favourable terms to total abstainers, as it has been recognized that such persons are on the whole likely to live longer than non-abstainers.... Accident insurance companies frequently allow to total abstainers a reduction of premium, varying from 5 to 10 per cent (p. 91).

"Alcohol may lower the resistance of the body to disease (p. 87).

"The Royal Commission on Licensing (1929-31) point out that the use of alcohol as an aid to work is regarded as physiologically unsound.

"The Health of Munition Workers Committee stated, 'A few of the workers are abstainers from alcohol in any form. These latter are usually the most reliable men.' (p. 86).

"Alcohol has been found to predispose to sunstroke (p. 88).

"Athletes...usually avoid alcohol because they know the harmful effect it may have on their strength and endurance." (p. 86).

General Booth of the Salvation Army was a wise man with some experience of the world and knew what he was talking about. Well, the General held that "nine-tenths of our poverty, squalor, vice and crime spring from this poisonous tap-root."

"Wine," it has been said on equally high religious authority, "is a mocker," and "it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs XX, I; XXIII, 32).

V. G. D.

## "HINDI VINIT" EXAMINATION

The Bombay Government has decided that all its employees except class IV should qualify themselves in Hindi by passing "one of the higher examinations conducted by the various *Prachar Sabhas* in the State, within a period of three years if they have not already done so." And for that it has recognized the *Hindi Vinit* examination (the fourth examination) of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, as one of the four qualifying examinations.

Many enquiries are made regarding this examination. So it has become necessary to make this announcement. The Gujarat Vidyapith holds five graded examinations in Hindi and the *Hindi Vinit* examination is the fourth examination in the series. The first three examinations are the *Hindi Pahali*, *Hindi Doosari* and *Hindi Teesari*. To qualify oneself for appearing in the fourth i.e. *Hindi Vinit* examination, the first three examinations, viz., the *Hindi Pahali*, *Doosari* and *Teesari* have to be passed. Those who can prepare themselves can sit directly in the *Hindi Doosari*, and having passed it they have to pass the *Hindi Teesari* to go to the *Hindi Vinit* (i.e. the fourth) examination.

These examinations are bi-annual and are held all over Gujarat in various centres, in the months of April and September every year. The application forms for the examinations are accepted some six weeks before the dates of the examinations. Regarding the dates of the examinations and the last dates of the acceptance of the application forms an announcement is made in the papers at the suitable time.

The next examinations now will be held in the second week of April, 1952. Detailed information regarding the syllabuses, the text-books and the rules and regulations of the examinations can be had on sending 3 annas postage stamps from the undersigned. No enquiries unaccompanied by postage stamps will be attended to.

Gujarat Vidyapith, GIRIRAJ KISHORE,
Ahmedabad-9 Parikshamantri,
9-9-'51 Hindi Examinations

HARIJAN

Sept. 15 1951

## TANDONJI'S RESIGNATION

Circumstances left no alternative to Tandonji and the A.I.C.C. but, for the former, to resign the Congress Presidentship and, for the latter, to accept it. Tandonji's conduct throughout was correct constitutionally and upright morally. He deserves highest tributes for preferring to relinquish the Presidentship to accepting resignations given "under pressure". The mistake lay, in my humble opinion, in placing him in that position last year.

Jawaharlalji has apparently gained his point. He will be able now to reconstitute the Working Committee as he may wish. Let me hope that this step will revitalize the Congress in the way he desires. This is possible only if the A.I.C.C. has installed him willingly and with an intelligent acceptance of his ideas. If it has accepted his leadership either helplessly or for considerations other than ideological, this hope will be a day-dream.

This is a serious situation. An organization becomes senile when it ceases to provide a succession of able leaders and is afraid to dispense with the services of its first man. Such feebleness results when it maintains in important places weak or sycophantic followers and gets rid of or drives out those who have the courage to honestly criticize their leaders until they are convinced.

Neither the Nehru Government nor the Congress can become strong and helpful to the nation with such followers. As soon as they perceive that Nehru is no longer in the ascendant, they will desert him and worship another rising sun even with a diametrically opposite ideology. It is such following which brings about the fall of both the leader and the organization with a crash.

I hope Jawaharlalji will encourage in the reconstitution of the Working Committee men who want him to explain to them every step in his policy before endorsing it, and occasionally say hard things to him for the good of the administration. An organization becomes vitalized and provides a succession of leaders to the extent it allows freedom to able and intelligent men to express themselves unreservedly and even dissent from the leader's opinion.

Wardha, 10-9-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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## REMOVAL OF ENGLISH

As stated in these columns before, the Government of Bombay wrote to the various Universities in the State "seeking your cordial co-operation in the proposed actions and policy of Government in this vital matter" of the medium of instruction at the University stage of education. The letter of Government at the outset describes its policy regarding English and Hindi in secondary schools. As we know, "the teaching of English in the first three standards of secondary schools" has been discontinued and the letter adds that "from 1951 the teaching of English is permissible only in the 8th standard". On the other hand Hindi has been introduced in these first three standards of secondary schools and Government proposes that "it will be extended year by year upto the 11th standard."

From this the Government letter proceeds further to argue that

> "pupils who complete the 11th standard and appear for the S.S.C.E. in March 1955 will have studied Hindi for 7 years and English for four or five years only as compulsory languages. Thus a large number of students passing the S.S.C.E. in 1955 will have better knowledge of Hindi than of English."

And therefrom the letter concludes:

> "for this reason it will be unsound educationally to continue English as the medium of instruction for University teaching subsequent to 1955."

It is a sound statement so far as it goes. One only wishes that the sanguine hopes entertained by Government come true. For, it is not true to say that "teaching of English is permissible only in the 8th standard"; nor is it that Hindi is taught to all boys in Stds. V, VI, and VII. It is well known that Government has allowed *optional* English in Std. VII, to the great detriment of its own policy regarding English, thus endangering the smooth working and harmonious progress and efficiency of Std. VIII, which today receives both kinds of students — those who had English for a year in Std. VII and those who had not. Again Hindi is not taught in Std. V, VI and VII of our primary schools except in a few cases. Moreover, it is not compulsory there. Thus on both these counts Std. VIII has had a very bad beginning so far as the work of secondary schools goes. It will surely tell upon the work and progress of our secondary schools. Government will do well to remedy these defects before planning or suggesting anything for higher education.

There is another thing also, which should be set right before going to do anything for the colleges. As we know, the regional languages are to be the media of secondary education. Again the S.S.C.E. rules allow a student to replace English by Hindi; i.e. a student may pass his S.S.C.E. without English. But the anomaly that persists as a vestige of the rule of English over the whole field of our education, is that the papers for the S.S.C.E. are drawn and given to candidates in English and in spite of repeated demands both from the public as well as the

students, this state of things is not improved. This should have been done long ago. It must be done at least from March, 1952 onwards. Again English still continues as the medium of instruction for some subjects in the secondary schools. Will Government issue a directive in this regard? Like untouchability which has woven itself into the very texture of our society, English has had its sway over almost the whole of our educational, administrative and cultural fields. Without a basic and thorough-going change in the primary and secondary stages of our education it is futile to suggest or expect any sudden change to come over at the higher level. Government will do better if it minds first things first and mends the order at the first two stages of education which are entirely under its control and guidance.

Further consideration of the Bombay Government's letter will be taken up in the next issue.

8-9-'51 M. P. DESAI

## AN EXPLANATION

I have published in the last issue of *Harijan* Vinobaji's and my statements on the Congress crisis, a statement by Shri Purushottamdas Tandon in reply to me and my note on it. The reader will feel confused by the want of any relationship between my statement and Tandonji's reply. I must explain it.

In addition to my published statement, I had written the article "Nehru-Tandon Controversy", which is being published today. When I prepared it, it was too late to include it in the last issue. Hence, I sent it to the *Hindustan Times* and the *Janmabhumi* (Gujarati) so that it might be published before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. I also sent advance copies of it to Shris Tandonji and Nehru along with the full texts of Vinoba's and my statements. Shri Tandonji assumed that my article must have been duly published and so immediately issued a statement in reply. The article, however, is published in both the papers only today. Thus Shri Tandonji's reply became known to the public while the basis for it was unknown to it. The public will now understand the relevancy of Tandonji's statement.

It will be noticed that Shri Tandonji's public statement deals with only one of the points discussed by me in my article, "Nehru-Tandon Controversy". The rest, equally important, are omitted.

Wardha, 7-9-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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## NEHRU-TANDON CONTROVERSY

The situation arising out of the Nehru-Tandon controversy is apparently an internal affair of the Congress. But it may easily develop into a matter of great importance to the whole nation, with repercussions outside.

I believe that under the new situation arising out of independence the President of a party must be a person capable of being elected the leader of the Parliament and trusted to assume the responsibility of the Prime-Ministership of the country, if that party has a majority in the (Indian) Parliament. The leader of the party in the House and of the organization as a whole cannot be two different individuals. The pre-independence notion that the Congress President was the elected leader of the Congress and the Prime Ministers of Governments were subordinate to him must be suitably revised. For the convenience of organizational work outside the Parliament, there might be a Chairman, capable of relieving the true President (Premier) from routine work and acting as an interpreter of Government policies and measures to the outside public and to the lay members of the party. But, he cannot control the Prime Minister in his administration. If he thinks that the Prime Minister is inefficient, or disobeys the policies and resolutions of the Congress, he may report to the A.I.C.C. That body, of course, has the right to dismiss him, if he has lost its confidence. In that case it would be necessary to elect a new leader, i.e. a new Prime Minister and a new Cabinet.

If Pandit Nehru is to be dismissed, either the Party in the Parliament can do so, or the A.I.C.C. If both of them want him to continue, and if the post of the President is kept separate, its holder must so adjust himself as to act as his junior.

At the time of the Presidential election last year, I had stated:

> "......I think that the delegates should consider the election of the President as, in a way, a vote on the Prime Minister. If they want the present Prime Minister to continue to govern the country, they should give him a President, who will be a source of strength, if not also inspiration, to him. If they want him to leave that office, they should give him a President, who will be a thorn in his sides."

I hold the same views still.

As I judge the situation the Congress on the whole knows its limitations perfectly well. The general body of Congressmen love Nehru with all his merits and demerits. They take him whole and adore him for his merits, and forgive him for his faults. However regrettable the situation might be for a sixty-year old organization, the fact stands that the A.I.C.C. is not in a position to suggest any other name, into whose hands it would deliver the Premiership of India — with confidence and the general approval of the people. Instead of getting angry with itself for remaining so weak as not to be able to have kept ready an unbroken succession of able leaders, it is angry with Jawaharlalji for getting too big for it.

Congress leaders should have known sufficiently that Nehru and Tandonji, though each of them individually an honourable man, were mutually incompatible, and it should not have tried to yoke them together. But they tried the experiment and have realized that the Congress plough is unable to turn the earth. The wise course is to rectify the mistake.

The people are not clearly told what Nehru's grievance is against Tandonji. Nehru's views are well-known. He is an internationalist; he does not want India to enter into any of the power blocs. His attitude towards Pakistan is one of friendliness and peace without surrendering to its bullying. He is averse to war. At home, he is a friend of the Muslims, the Christians and other minorities and cannot think of allotting to them a status lower than that of the proudest and tallest Hindu. He is not a worshipper of any communal culture, and does not think that because a particular community forms a very large majority of India, its should be the ruling and exclusive

culture of India. Tandonji and his people represent the upper class of orthodox Hinduism, with the zest of Arya Samaj added to it. They worship the past in matters of reform of social institutions, and would fain conserve traditional customs as much as possible. Nehru is a futurist, and a cosmopolitan. He governs India, but regards her as only a part of a greater region, namely, the world; and his mental eye sees the picture of India as she should look in 2100 A. C. He would like to see it well established on that path, while he is still able to act. Several Hindu leaders, perhaps Tandonji and his followers also, regard the period between 1100 and 1950 as that of humiliation, frustration and defeat for India. To Nehru there has been no period of absolute darkness; struggle there was of course at every stage, as there is now. But even in the most tragic stages, the struggle ultimately led to progress. It is not a descent from *Satya Yuga* to *Kali Yuga*, but a constant evolution from infancy to maturity of the nations. He does not curse the Muslims for having ruled India for some centuries and would not wipe out everything that they might have left. He does not hate the British for having ruled India and would not change the names of New Delhi's roads named after its Rulers and Viceroys, or remove the statues of British monarchs. There is no trace of "return to the past" in him. In economic matters he is an industrialist with a strongly Socialist outlook. His heart is not in the Gandhian economic programme, because he suspects in it the worship of the old and forsaken gods — a spirit of "return-ism". When he will feel convinced that the *charkha* and the *ghani* of 1951 are not their namesakes of 1751 or before, but precursors of what we equally with him want the world to be like in 2100 A. D., I have a hope that he will be a more ardent missionary of the *charkha* than ourselves. But that is in God's hands.

For the present he differs from us in his economic approach, and as every one knows, constructive workers are severely critical of his economic programmes and policies.

On all these matters, Tandonji and his colleagues have a different way of thinking. On international and communal matters some of them have already declared themselves in favour of the Anglo-American bloc, and the supremacy of the Hindu culture and Sanskritized language. On the economic side, several, if not all of them, are capitalist-minded rather than Socialist-minded. Their personal convictions and attitudes do not always accord with the declared aims and resolutions of the Congress. Some of them would be more appropriately right in the Hindu Mahasabha and similar bodies than in the Congress.

Congress hopes to win the elections. Does it want to continue the services of Jawaharlalji? If so, it is its duty to see that he does not get such Parliamentarians in his own party, whose views on grave matters are different from his. If the work of the selection of candidates is to be done by Tandonji and of men of his views, this is very likely. Every time he would have to flare up, and he would be constantly told that he was dictating, and not acting democratically. It is not fair to him.

Of course, the Congress has a right to revise its policies, if the majority of Congressmen are so inclined. In that case it should frankly ask Nehru and the people of his way of thinking to leave the Congress or remain in a minority and endeavour to secure their majority. They must of course relieve Nehru of the Premiership immediately.

The charge that Jawaharlalji is working for dictatorship seems to me to be quite groundless. The insinuation that being the head of the State and Master of the Army and the Police, unless he is checked in time, he might instal himself as a dictator appears to me very uncharitable. There is no fear of any such thing happening in the case of Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru knows democracy far more intimately than those who speak of it. There is rather ground for an apprehension of the opposite type: namely, an attempt to perform a *coup d'etat* by the reactionary elements, and establish an upper-class Hindu Fascist regime. Gandhiji was believed to be an enemy of the Hindus, and we know how he was removed.

As suggested by me more than once during the last three years, if the Congress wants to build for the future, and to function as a well-knit, homogeneous and socially solid party organization, with a constantly progressive outlook, I humbly suggest that it should combine the posts of the leader of the Central Party and the Congress President, and be satisfied with electing a Chairman and an Executive Committee to work under him for non-Parliamentary work. This body should be appointed with an eye to keep in readiness a second line of statesmen and administrators of Congress ideology. Hence it should be a body of persons, whose approach to various important and far-reaching problems and plans are, as much as possible, identical with those of the Prime Minister. Otherwise, the Congress President with his Cabinet and the Prime Minister with his Cabinet can hardly feel at ease with each other, and sooner or later one would have to leave or suppress himself.

Wardha, 1-9-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

## THIS PICTURE AND THAT

### I

### Satyagraha by Welsh Nationalists

Land Acquisition by the Army

(*From Sir Francis Low*)

London, August 31

Scenes reminiscent of the civil disobedience days in India were witnessed yesterday in Wales when 75 men and women sat down four deep on the roadway to prevent army lorries from entering or leaving an army camp at Trawsfynydd, in Merioneth.

When lorries approached, the Welsh satyagrahis stretched themselves at full length in front of the vehicles thereby compelling them to stop. This unusual demonstration was undertaken by the Welsh Nationalist Party as a protest against the acquisition by the War Office of a further 5,000 acres of land for army purposes. It is claimed by the Welsh Nationalists that the acquisition of the land "would gravely harm Welsh national life" and that for the Government to disregard the Welsh people's conviction could be described "as nothing less than shameless aggression".

Among those who lay down on the road were the Vice-Principal of the Brecon Congregational College and several Ministers. The satyagraha was called off late in the afternoon out of sympathy for the police who, however, did not arrest any of the demonstrators.

(From *The Times of India*, Sept. 2, 1951)

*And*

### II

### Satyagraha in Darbhanga

[*By Shri Hridayanarayan Chaudhari*]

In the village of Muria, about 9 miles from Darbhanga, the Government constructed an embankment at a cost of Rs 4,000/- for "irrigational purposes". The embankment, it was calculated, would irrigate 25 to 40 acres of land. Some time later, floods rushed on to lands to the north of the embankment, putting the crops and the houses in danger. The villagers approached the officers with a request to break the embankment. Their request was granted.

Then the officers along with the police came to the spot to break the embankment. On getting to know this, the villagers of the south resisted saying that the flow of water might damage their crops and homes. The officers precipitated no action that day.

But the next day they returned fully armed. As a protest, the villagers, among whom were some women, lay down on the embankment. The police opened fire and 9 persons including 4 women succumbed to bullets. From the reports published, it does not appear that the resisters had committed any act of violence. The sixteen injured were admitted to the Darbhanga Hospital.

It appears that the Government follows no seriously thought-out plan at all in constructing roads and dams. Consequently, at one place they create a dearth of water, and at another people suffer from its excess. Even the famine in North Bihar is attributed to the way the Government follows in constructing various roads. And when suffering follows and there is resistance by the people, they are sought to be suppressed by *lathis* and bullets.

(Translated from Hindi)

## LITERACY *vs.* KNOWLEDGE ?

*(By Norman Cousins)*

In a small Indian village less than two hours by car from Calcutta I spoke to one of the finest conversationalists it has been my pleasure to meet anywhere in the world. He was a farmer of fifty-two, the leading citizen of the village, renowned in the area for his knoledge of Hindu religion and philosophy and for his good-natured humour. We conversed through an interpreter. After about forty minutes of philosophical exchange leavened by the farmer's illuminating witticisms I got up to leave. I expressed the hope we might be able to continue our discussion by correspondence after I returned to the United States.

The farmer hesitated before saying anything, then looked down at the ground while the interpreter stammered his reply.

" Our friend is deeply honoured at the suggestion that you and he correspond but regrets he is unable to do so as he has never been taught how to read or write. He would be glad to correspond through a translator, but there is no one in this village or the next who is qualified for such work. But he is grateful indeed for your kind thought."

* * *

In Madras, following a lecture at the University, a young man of about thirty got up to ask a question about political organization in America. I did as best as I could in the five minutes I had been forced to budget for each question. After the talk, however, I sought him out and offered to send him material from time to time from America. Then I handed him a pad and pencil to write down his name and address.

" If it would not offend you," he said in English, with an accent that revealed some slight Oxford influence at least, " I should be grateful if you would write my name and address down for me. I have never learned how to write — in English or Hindi. I understand and speak English because for eight years I was a bearer for an English gentleman who was kind and patient with me. I am intending to go to an adult school so that I may read and write English, and perhaps some day I may be able to read for myself the material you will send me."

* * *

Incidents such as these were repeated perhaps a dozen or more times during my visit to India. And each time I had the same feeling of momentary shock. It was difficult to reconcile the ease and frequency with which illiteracy and intelligence went together. When you come from a part of the world where the only persons who can't sign their own names are dolts or ignoramuses you can't readily accustom yourself to the idea that people can be well developed intellectually and yet have no contact with the written word.

There is very little real contact between the world of events and ideas and the world of the village. This is not necessarily the result of the widespread illiteracy but of the fact that the two worlds are separate and apart. When you get thirty or forty miles outside one of the large cities you have left behind you a way of life as far removed from the life of the village as the pre-Christian tenth century is from the twentieth. This is not by way of passing judgment, for, I am beginning to suspect that there are survival values inherent in the Indian village way of life which have so far eluded the Western world; the point I am trying to make is that the gap between the life and thought of the educated few and the uneducated many, is so wide and deep as to be almost unfathomable. Geographically, historically, and politically, the villager is a citizen of India; intellectually, he regards India as more of a universe of which he is a part than as a well-defined nation which has jurisdiction over him in many respects and to which he has specified obligations.

An English journalist in Calcutta told me of an experience he had in a village some seventy miles from the city. He was interviewing some people about progress in India since the British had left and discovered that some of those present didn't even know the Brtish had come. I encountered nothing so extreme as this, but did go into village after village where the names of Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, Hitler, and Attlee were unheard of. Not far from Madras I spoke to village elders who were completely in the dark about Communism and democracy or atomic energy or the Korean War or the Civil War in China or the United Nations or any of the major issues and events that dominate the times. In one or two instances, incredible as it may seem, I came across men who were unfamiliar with the name of Mahatma Gandhi.

What does this widespread illiteracy and lack of knowledge add up to ? It would be a serious blunder for us to conclude that the bulk of the Indian people are backward or unintelligent or ignorant. The yardsticks of the West for measuring intellectual capacity or cultural standing are completely out of place when applied to India. Many of the Indian people may be uninformed about the ideological struggle going on in the world today and may be unable to read or write, but their personalities are as well integrated as those of any people in the world. Whatever the shortage of information, there is certainly no shortage of intellectual awareness or acuteness. Even more important is the basic fact that there is a highly developed sense of justice and moral obligation which would excite the admiration of theologians and educators both. A discussion about the purpose in life or about man's relationship to his fellows can be stimulating and rewarding, and though your companions may be unable to read or write, you are not mindful of any lack of philosophical scholarship.

(Abridged from the *Saturday Review*, 7th April, 1951)

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## NOTES

### A Good Suggestion

[Shri M. A. Balasubramanyan, a Harijan worker of Madukkarai in South India, has sent a report of the scheme he has worked upon in his place. A summary of the report is given below, as it will be of interest to Harijan workers in general. —Ed.]

It has been my experience that the work of Harijan uplift is a hard nut to crack. For the last fifteen years, I have been working among the Harijans. All the time I was thinking how best to bring about their uplift. It was only 18 months ago that a workable scheme struck me. I tried it in practice and I have found its good results.

I collected some enthusiastic Harijans and put before them my scheme. It was very simple. They were persuaded to collect all the rubbish found in and around their colony and heap it at one spot. In the beginning they were reluctant to do so. But soon they overcame their indifference and began to take interest in the work. After six months a big heap had grown which fetched Rs 250 at an auction sale. This came as a great surprise to them all. It gave them further encouragement, as a result of which they were able to get a bigger amount in the next auction. Now they are in possession of over Rs 500 and are eagerly awaiting the ensuing auction.

Now they have made a common fund of this amount and are able to get loans from it instead of from others who usually charged a very high rate of interest. Here they have to pay only a very reasonable interest. This has given them a good relief.

### U. S. Children's Gift to India

The following little note, accompanied by a small monetary gift, from three American girls was received by Shri B. N. Rau, our delegate to the United Nations:

"Dear Sir Benegal-Narsing Rau,

"Greetings to you from Susan Kilian, Mary Beth Cummins and Josephine Houssman.

"Yesterday we three were hungry and shared a banana. We thanked God for food.

"Then we recalled that Indian children lacked food. What could we do about it?

"Mary Beth, aged three, held out the rest of her share of the banana. "Here," she said.

"We explained that bananas wouldn't keep fresh all the way to India, that it was money that was needed to buy wheat to send to India's children. So we are sending this bit to you to buy wheat for the children of India with our hearts full of sympathy for them in their trouble."

Shri B. N. Rau sent the letter and the gift to the Prime Minister, who in a personal letter acknowledging the gift says, "Your gift is very welcome. Indeed, it is more welcome than all the big gifts that we have received."

(From a P. T. I. report).

### Navajivan Publications

Arrangements for the sale of our publications at Wardha and Nagpur have now been made. Accordingly, all our publications — Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and English — will henceforward be available from the following:

(1) Swaraj Bhandar, WARDHA.

(2) Goseva Charmalaya, Sitabardi, NAGPUR.

MANAGER,
Navajivan Publishing House,
Ahmedabad-9

## SHRI VINOBA'S NORTHERN TOUR

As announced in the papers, Vinoba starts tomorrow morning on foot tour in the northern direction. If nothing abnormal happens he expects to reach Delhi by the end of October.

Before starting he initiated two programmes for local workers, namely, intense constructive work in Wardha and about twenty-five surrounding villages, and getting land-gifts for distribution among the landless poor.

Vinoba addressed a meeting this afternoon at Paunar before a large audience consisting of the people of Wardha and surrounding villages, where he explained the details of constructive work and made an appeal for bringing their offerings to the land-gifts mission. A small committee with myself as Chairman, Shri Jaju as Vice-Chairman and Thakurdas Bang to organize work was appointed. He gave a few illustrations of the kind of work which could be organized in the interest of the people and with their co-operation. He described the filthy condition of the towns and villages and stressed the importance of sanitation. He also suggested co-operative societies and basic education.

He said that his experience in Telangana had emboldened him to ask for land elsewhere also. It was bound to be one of the items of his work during the tour. He wanted the people of Wardha district to bless his mission by giving an auspicious start. That would put strength in his appeal during the tour. About six hundred acres of land for gifts were announced at the meeting. It should be remembered that Wardha is not a land of great Zamindars like Telangana. Hence very large gifts could not be expected. The largest single gift is of one hundred acres, the smallest being of half an acre. A Khoja landowner, who wanted to sell away all his land, upon learning about the mission, changed his mind and gifted all of it away — sixty-five acres — to Vinoba.

Incidentally readers will be interested to learn that Vinoba completed his fifty-sixth year today.

Wardha, 11-9-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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*Subscription Rates* — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or $2.
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.